

Restoring God's Plan for the Family: A Christian Home

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Ephesians 5:22-6:4

First of all, I would like to say thank you for the warm welcome you've extended to me and to my family. I really appreciate it.

Today, we will continue our series, *Restoring God's Plan for the Family*. Do you truly believe that God is doing something for the family? Is God really working in the family?

My Broken Home. I grew up in a broken home. My father left us when I was young. My mother died early from depression. My sisters rebelled. Sad to say, many families right now are not happy. They start well, but end up broken. When they cannot solve their problems, they give up.

Is God doing something in the family? I believe, and this is my conviction, that God is restoring his plan for the family **through Jesus Christ our Lord**. After the tragic events in my own family, my sisters and I became Christians. We learned how to forgive our Father. And now, we are ministering to him. God truly is doing something for my family.

Today's message is entitled **A Christian Home**.

The orchestra. Let me ask you: have you ever watched an orchestra perform live? I haven't seen one in person, but I did watch one on YouTube. Amazing, isn't it? The melody of the music is so lovely, so wonderfully and beautifully played. It revitalizes the souls of the viewers. You can hear the praise of the audience.

Now my question is, how do they create beautiful music, even though there are many different instruments? You know the secret? **They harmonize with each other**. They play these different musical instruments in harmony.

This kind of harmonious performance is not easy. It takes time, effort, and hard work. It needs humility, mutual submission, and collaboration to create harmony. What's more, the orchestra must follow the conductor's baton, and they must play according to the musical arrangement. Each musician must know and play his/her own role. They work and support each other.

Imagine what will happen if they start to play on their own without coordination. Instead of beautiful music, they will create destructive noise. The same is true in our homes; if we fail

to harmonize with one another because of role confusion, we will end up creating noise and chaos instead of beautiful and harmonious relationships.

So how do we create harmony and how do we have a Christian home?

3 Godly Principles that Will Help You Create Harmony at Home

There are 3 essential ingredients or principles that we can learn to apply to create harmony in our home. If we want to have a blissful family, we have to master and apply these principles.

Principle #1. For wives, be a Submissive Wife

Principle #2. For husbands, be a Loving Husband

Principle #3. For children, be Obedient Children

These three ingredients – submission, love, and obedience – will create harmony in your home.

Principle # 1 Be a Submissive Wife

(Before: Abuse. Now: a Christian Wife)

Let's go to our first principle: being a submissive wife.

Ephesians 5:22-24

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

In this passage, Paul commands the wives to submit to their husbands.

The greek word that Paul used for submit is *hupotassō* (ὑποτάσσω), where *hupo* means "to be under" or "to be subject to," and the word *tasso* means "to arrange." The word *hupotassō* was used as a military term meaning "to arrange troops under the command of a leader." The word also means, "to put under, be subject to, to place in subjection under."

Why Wives Find Submitting Difficult

Wives, will you agree and are you willing to be subject to your husband?

Some wives have difficulty submitting to their husbands because of their experiences. And in this passage, Paul deals precisely with this issue as he speaks to the Ephesian wives.

In those days, the pagans saw women as inferior beings, playthings for the dominant male. The wife was not equal to her husband as a person, or in any other way. The wife existed to fulfill her husband's needs and to serve him. Wives in such relationships have hurts and pain. They are confused. And Paul speaks to them now that they are Christians.

Paul says, submit to your husband as the church submits to the Lord. Consider your husband the Lord. Or in short, treat your husband like a king. This is how you will show your love for your husband.

We submit to His Lordship. When you submit yourself to Christ and let Him be the Lord of your life, you will have no difficulty submitting to your husband.

Wives, as you submit to Christ willingly, wholehearted, sincerely, eagerly, voluntarily, not by force – submit also in this way to your husband. Can you do that?

Why Submit? For what reason should a wife submit? The Bible says, it is because the man is the head of the family. God placed the leadership role with the man, not the wife. Can you imagine the burden and weight that the husband is carrying? He is responsible for leading his family.

He is the Head. *κεφαλη* [kephalē] Head means authority. God ordained man to be the head, the leader, of the House. God place the leadership with the husband and not with the wife.

Marital Problems: a Battle for Control

Most of today's marital problems are a battle for control, for who should be followed, or who's more right.

Both husband and wife are trying to solve the same problems, but they have different approaches. The woman thinks differently and so does the man. Because of two different opinions, tensions rise and they start opposing each other. Due to conflicts, they quarrel with each other. The root of these problems mostly is selfishness (my will, not thy will be done).

Some women are domineering and we cannot blame them. It's not because they lack character, but because their husband is unable to lead the family. But wives must submit to their husband no matter what, because God made man the head of the family, the leader of the house.

- **The wife must submit to her Husband.** Submitting to your husband is your obedience to God. By submitting, you are fulfilling God's design for the family. The woman was commanded to be subject to her husband. If we reject the calling of God to submit to the husband, we dishonor his Word.

- **The husband must exercise his authority.** Now as Christ exercises his authority over the church, so the husband should also exercise his authority over his family. Of course, this is not a dictatorship; it does not mean that the wife becomes a slave.
- **Modelling Christ.** Husbands, your headship should be modelled on the way Christ loves and leads the church, and not on human systems of authority. This should be our attitude.

Wives should submit in everything

1 Peter 3:1-6 *Wives be submissive (even to an unbelieving husband, to win your husband)*

What happens when women do not submit? It can become a lifelong source of disappointment, frustration, tension, and eventually our downfall in a relationship.

Wives, you have to submit to your husband in everything: without complaint, without a grudge, without conditions, and without being unhappy. Be a husband lover. Be subject to your husband in everything,

- If the wife does not submit in everything, she dishonors the leadership of the husband. The man would no longer lead the family; he would lose his competence to lead. If this continues, he will become less cooperative and he will ignore his duties. At worst, he will search for someone who will listen to him.
- Discover your husband's personal, unique needs, and try to meet them. Listen and understand, value your husband's word/decision, show support and respect.
- The man needs to gain self-respect and self-confidence. You need to trust him totally. Acknowledge him and be proud of him. Give praise and appreciation instead of seeking it. This will motivate your husband more and also reward him.

Wives, I encourage you today to make a decision to voluntarily place yourself under your husband's authority.

Illustration: Orchestra

As in the orchestra, the husband acts as the leader (1st violin). He plays the main line or the melody of the song. If the husband is the 1st violin, the wife plays the second violin as a supporting role. Usually the second violins play a supportive role harmonically and rhythmically.

Although the two sections play different parts, all members share in the responsibility of blending seamlessly together as one unit. All first violins appreciate the value and hard

work of the second violins. While the first violins concentrate on their own difficulties in creating excitement in the higher registers or the fast passages, they constantly rely on the musical support of the second violins.

Wives, if you give your full support to your husband, he will indeed appreciate it.

Principle #2 Be a Loving Husband

(Before: Dominant. Now: a Christian Father)

Our second principle focuses on the husband: Be a Loving Husband.

Ephesians 5:25-33

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The Husband in the Roman Period: Strong/Dominant Leadership

Paul is speaking to the Ephesian husbands. In the Roman times, men were the strong / dominant leaders and they viewed women as playthings.

Now that you are a Christian, Paul says, you have to love your wife as Christ loves the church.

The Relationship between Christ and the Church

Husbands, love your wives. The command is to love your wife, not to command her, not to subjugate or dominate her.

To "love" (ἀγαπάτε, *agapate*) – the term is intentional, meaning you are willing and determined to love. This divine kind of love is not motivated by self-interest or the attractiveness of the one loved, but by a sincere interest in that person's well being. This is the kind of love Jesus showed his church. He did not love you because you are lovable. It is a love that loves even when that person is unlovely and undeserving. We are unworthy; but

no matter who we are, still, God showed His love for us. Husbands, this is how we should show our love for our wives. No matter who she is, love her.

Marital Problem: Stony or Icy Hearts

The problem with the husbands today: some of them have a stony or icy heart. Many wives complain that their husbands are hard, dominating, harsh, over-controlled, unloving. They have stone hearts or icy hearts: emotionless, cold. The wives cannot feel the love of their husbands.

Husbands, we have to understand our mates. Our wives are longing for our love. Affection is very important to women. We have to give ample praise rather than criticism. Treat your wife with gentleness. Recognize her need for togetherness. Discover her particular, individual needs and try to meet them. Meet your spouse's needs as you would want your spouse to meet yours. Cooperate with her in every move to improve your marriage.

Manner of Love: As Christ loved the Church

Jesus gave us the model for how we should love our wives. Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. We have to love her sacrificially, not reluctantly.

- **The wife should not be our last priority.** The problem with us men: we fill our schedules with activities. Yes, we do it because we want the best for our family, but this often means that the wife is the last priority. We are so busy that we have stopped communicating. We must give our time: time is very important for the wives. Prioritize her over work.

Let her feel that she has value to you. That's what most ladies are looking for. Husbands, love your wives sacrificially. Give to her all your abilities, power, energy, the way Christ did for the church. Christ died for the church. Our love for our wives must resemble Christ's love.

- **We must purify our wives, not condemn them.** We should be concerned more with their inward beauty.

Our Lord Jesus Christ sanctified and cleansed the church. As husbands, we have to spend time teaching our wives the Word of God. Do not condemn their attitude but rather inspire them to grow. Do not use argumentative words to change them; use the word of God. Spend time together studying the Word of God. A growing relationship with Christ should be your priority for your family.

He does this by the work of the Spirit. Husbands are to have a Christ-like passion to

bring their wives into deeper purity and holiness before God.

- **A husband should be caring and deeply concerned about his wife's welfare.** God designed us to work, to protect, to provide, and to ensure security for our wives. The Bible says the wife is a weaker vessel – not intellectually or morally, but in general constitution. She needs the husband's strength and support. She needs to be held up, needs to be encouraged, and kept safe not just physically but also relationally. She needs the strength of the man.

God and a loving husband are two great things that women can have. She does not only need a loving God, she also needs a loving husband.

Principle #3 Be Obedient Children

Children, obey your parents.

Ephesians 6:1-4

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Why do some children not obey their parents?

I know many children do not obey their parents. There are many reasons.

- It's natural for them. Some children are born with temperamental dispositions, or are hyperactive, impulsive, irritable, with a stubborn, rebellious, or strong will.
- Children disobey as a way of establishing their independence. When I was a kid, I didn't enjoy obeying my parents. It drained me. It killed my joy.

But, children, you must obey your parents because God commanded you to obey. If you are obeying God, if you are obedient to God, you will obey your parents. Obeying God means obeying the people God has placed over you. You should obey your parents in all things as if you are obeying the Lord because that's what the Lord wants you to do.

The Bible says children should obey because: (1) it is right; (2) it is commanded; (3) it brings blessings. God uses parents to mold us, to protect us, to help us in everything. So we have to obey our parents. Our relationship with our parents will be so much happier.

The fault of the Parents

Sometimes, children are obedient, but it's not entirely their fault. Sometimes the fault lies with the parents.

- Tensions at home. Parents are under stress from other problems, which creates stress in the children through insecurity, anger, or resentment
- Unbiblical Model. Some parents are overly harsh with their children
- Wrong discipline. Some parents exasperate their children. They frighten the children, and cause hurt and foster rebellion. Parents may actually punish pro-social and appropriate behavior. Parents and children both tend to use punishing and threatening communication and behavior in order to influence the other to do what they want.
- Imbalance. There can be imbalance both in nurture and admonition.
- Poor quality parent-child attachment and relationships. This happens because parents do not spend enough quality time with the children.

A Letter from a Child

I would like to share with you a letter I once read, written by a child to their parents.

"You shout at me for very little mistakes. It's not teaching, it's emotional abuse. Every failure I encounter makes me feel like a disappointment to you – you kill me inside. I've shaped my life as best I can to please you. You say you're proud of me but I'm not happy. Every time you raise your hand, I'm afraid that you're going to hit me. Calling me lazy is not ok. Everything I'm passionate about is worthless to you. Every day when I wake up or when I go to sleep, I feel like a failure. I learned to hold grudges because of you. The greatest grudges I have are about myself. Because of you, I don't like me. I love you but I don't like you. I don't want to grow up to be like you."

It is very challenging to raise children. We can only fulfill this responsibility with wisdom from and with the leading of the Spirit.

This is why Paul says to parents, **do not provoke your children to anger.**

What things can provoke our children? Be careful of these things:

- Over-protection. They do not see that as love, but as abuse.
- Pushing for achievements unrealistically. We crush our children to excel.
- Comparison. "Why can't you be like your sister?" This causes deep hurt.
- Discouragement. We ignore them when we get home; they want to be heard.
- Failing to sacrifice for them. They feel neglected

I also want to share this piece by Dorothy Law Nolte.

Children Learn What They Live

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

So parents, we have to be very careful about how we treat our children.

Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

Bring them up properly, because they can't do it alone. There are three things we can do, and I use the acronym L.I.M. for this:

- L – Lead the child to Christ.
- I – Instruct them in the Word of God.
- M – Model the love of God.

Children are looking for people they can follow and imitate. So we have to give them an example that they can imitate. This is how we can shed our light.

Conclusion

I know it is difficult to submit, to love, and to obey. A Christian home doesn't happen by accident. We need to be intentional. We need to know how to lead, we need to practice and persevere to make our home a Christian Home.

Submit, Love, and Obey through the Power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot do it with our own strength. We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. (Eph 5:18) The secret to achieving harmony in the home is the fullness of the Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit, as the Bible says, doesn't mean being filled the way a glass is filled with water because that's motionless.

Instead, being filled with the Holy Spirit should be like a boat being moved and driven by the water. We should be moved and carried along by the Holy Spirit. We should be like the members of the orchestra, following the leading of the Holy Spirit as the orchestra follows the leading of the conductor.

If you surrender to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to practice Submission, Love, and Obedience.

The unity of the church and the harmony of the home both depend on the Spirit. We must be filled with the spirit and follow His leading.

Spiritual Battle: take full armor. Ephesians 6:10-17

Satan will do his best to destroy what God has created. We have to be very careful. He wishes to destroy our families.

Ephesians 6:10-17

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

This is why Paul in Ephesians says we must put on the full armor of God, not just in the church, but also in our families.